

CLAIMS:

1. A coffin (10) having a base portion comprising a plurality of base panels (14), each base panel (14) being connected to the or each adjacent base panel (14) by a joint (16) such that each base panel (14) is foldable onto an adjacent base panel (14); and a plurality of side panels (18) each connected to the base portion (12) by a joint (20) such that each side panel (18) is foldable onto an adjacent base panel (14).
2. A coffin (10) as claimed in claim 1, wherein the base panels (14) are connected end to end as a linear series of adjacent panels (14).
3. A coffin (10) as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein each base panel (14) has a first side panel (18) foldably connected to a first edge (14a) thereof.
4. A coffin (10) as claimed in claim 3, wherein each base panel (14) has a second side panel (18) foldably connected to a second edge (14b) thereof opposed to the first edge (14a).
5. A coffin (10) as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein each side panel (18) is connected to the or each adjacent side panel (18) by a joint (22).
6. A coffin (10) as claimed in claim 5, wherein each side panel (18) is associated with a particular base panel (14) and the joint (22) between any pair of adjacent side panels (18) and the joint (16) between the associated pair of base panels (14) are substantially in register with one another.
7. A coffin (10) as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the joints (20) between the side panels (18) and the base panels (14) along one side of the base portion (12) are substantially in register with one another and are substantially perpendicular to the joints (16) between adjacent base panels (14).

8. A coffin (10) as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the base panels (14) and side panels (18) are substantially rectangular in shape.

5 9. A coffin (10) as claimed in any of claims 2 to 8, wherein the coffin (10) further comprises an end panel (24) connected to one of the endmost base panels (14) by a joint (26).

10 10. A coffin (10) as claimed in claim 9, wherein the coffin (10) comprises an end panel (24) connected to each of the endmost base panels (14) by a joint (26).

11. A coffin (10) as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the joints (16, 20, 22, 26) are flexible joints.

15 12. A coffin (10) as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the panels (14, 18, 24) are formed from plastics, wood, cardboard or metal.

20 13. A coffin (10) as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the side panels (18) and base panels (14) are included in a foldable continuous blank of material in which said joints (16, 20, 22) are provided as fold lines, weakened lines or grooves.

25 14. A coffin (10) as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein one base panel (14) and associated side panels (18) are included in a foldable continuous blank of material in which said joints (20) are provided as fold lines, weakened lines or grooves.

30 15. A coffin (10) as claimed in claim 14, wherein a plurality of said foldable continuous blanks are provided each connected to one or more adjacent foldable continuous blanks by respective joints.

16. A coffin (10) as claimed in any of claims 13 to 15, wherein the foldable continuous blank of material is formed from plastic.

17. A coffin (10) as claimed in claim 11 or 12, wherein the joints (16, 20, 22, 26) are formed from one or more pieces of natural or synthetic fabric (woven or non-woven), mesh or webbing, with said fabric, mesh or webbing preferably formed from nylon, polypropylene or a mixture thereof.

18. A coffin (10) as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the base panels (14) are foldable onto one another in a concertina-like manner.

19. A coffin (10) as claimed in claim 18, wherein after the side panels (18) and the end panels (24) have been folded onto the base panels (14), the base panels (14) are foldable onto one another in a concertina-like manner.

15

20. A coffin (10) as claimed in any preceding claim, further comprising a lid (33) adapted to fit the coffin (10) to maintain first and second side walls (30, 32) formed by the side panels (18) in use, in position relative to one another in the assembled configuration.

20

21. A coffin (10) as claimed in claim 20, wherein the lid (33) includes a plurality of lid panels (34), each lid panel (34) being connected to the or each adjacent lid panel (34) by a joint (35).

22. A coffin (10) as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the base panels (14), side panels (18), and end panels (24) if present, are attached to a sheet of material such that neighbouring panels (14, 18, 24) are sufficiently spaced apart so that the material between panels provides said joints (16, 20, 22, 26).

25

23. A coffin (10) as claimed in claim 22, wherein the sheet of material is suitably sized and dimensioned to form a lid for the coffin (10) in the assembled configuration.

5 24. A collapsible coffin (40; 140; 240) comprising first and second opposed end members (42, 44; 142, 144; 242, 244) spaced apart from one another by first and second collapsible side walls (46, 48; 146, 148; 246, 248); the coffin (40; 140; 240) being convertible between a storage configuration, wherein the side walls (46, 48; 146, 148; 246, 248) are in a collapsed state; and an in-use configuration,
10 wherein the side walls (46, 48; 146, 148; 246, 248) are in an extended state.

25. A coffin (40) as claimed in claim 24, wherein each of the side walls (46, 48) comprises a first collapsible zigzag arrangement (50) of struts (52).

15 26. A coffin (40) as claimed in claim 25, wherein the struts (52) are connected substantially end to end.

27. A coffin (40) as claimed in claim 25 or 26, wherein each of the side walls (46, 48) comprises a second zigzag arrangement (54) of struts (56), wherein the
20 second zigzag arrangement (54) is staggered from the first zigzag arrangement (50) thereby forming a lattice.

28. A coffin (40) as claimed in claim 27, wherein the struts (52, 56) are capable of movement relative to one another such that the lattice is capable of
25 concertina-like movement between the collapsed and extended states.

29. A coffin (40) as claimed in claim 27 or 28, further comprising locking means (60) to lock the struts (52, 56) in position when the lattice is in the extended state.

30. A coffin (140) as claimed in claim 24, wherein each of the side walls (146, 148) comprises a plurality of co-axial, telescopically collapsible members (70) extending between the first and second end members (142, 144).

5 31. A coffin (240) as claimed in claim 24, wherein each of the side walls (246, 248) comprises an articulated series of struts (72) convertible from a zigzag collapsed state to a co-linear extended state.

10 32. A coffin (40; 140; 240) as claimed in any one of claims 24 to 31, wherein the coffin (40; 140; 240) also comprises a base portion (62) disposed between the side walls (46, 48; 146, 148; 246, 248) and the end members (42, 44; 142, 144; 242, 244).

15 33. A coffin (40; 140; 240) as claimed in claim 32, wherein the base portion (62) comprises a series of elongate rods (64), each of which rods (64) is disposed between the side walls (46; 146; 246, 48; 148; 248) and located substantially parallel to the end members (42; 142; 242, 44; 144; 244).

20 34. A coffin (40; 140; 240) as claimed in any one of claims 24 to 33, wherein the coffin (40; 140; 240) further comprises a plurality of support rods (66) connected between the side walls (46; 146; 246, 48; 148; 248) and located substantially parallel to the end members (42; 142; 242, 44; 144; 244).

25 35. A coffin as claimed in claim 34, wherein the support rods (66) are disposed substantially parallel to, and spaced apart from, the elongate rods (64).

36. A coffin (40; 140; 240) as claimed in any one of claims 24 to 35, wherein the coffin (40; 140; 240) is substantially cuboid in its in-use configuration.